



## Fee Account – frequently asked questions

### Background

HM Courts & Tribunal Service now offer all customers a Fee Account (FA) service for the purpose of paying court issue fees in all offices of the County and Family Court, all magistrates' courts that deal with civil and family work, the Royal Courts of Justice, probate registries and the Court of Protection as from 17 November 2014.

Prior to national rollout, the new system was implemented in early adopter sites from 20 October 2014, these offices were the County Court Money Claims Centre (Salford), the county court at Cambridge and the Rolls Building (part of RCJ).

The service offers customers improved fee management and court application processing. Court applications will not be delayed as the correct fee will be deducted on lodgement (assuming sufficient customer funds/credit is available). Benefits of the service include:

- Single invoice for period spend – showing a breakdown on a per-case basis and refunds applied
- Reduced administration in raising and authorising cheques
- Control over payment method (customers can cancel the Direct Debit instruction at any time)
- No banking charges for each business cheque raised and processed
- Reduced delays caused by re-issue of payments to replace unsigned, incorrect value or lost cheques
- Refunds applied directly to a customer's FA account (avoiding the court administrative, postal and cheque banking delays).

This document provides a selection of frequently asked questions and their answers.

## **What is Fee Account?**

HM Courts & Tribunals Service offers customers a Fee Account service (FA) for the purpose of paying court issue fees.

The service offers customers improved fee management and court application processing. Court applications will not be delayed as the correct fee will be deducted on lodgement (assuming sufficient customer funds/credit is available). Additional benefits of the service include:

- no banking charges for each business cheque raised and processed
- reduced administration in raising and authorising cheques
- reduced delays caused by re-issue of payments to replace unsigned, incorrect value or lost cheques
- refunds applied directly to a customer's account (avoiding the court administrative, postal and cheque banking delays).

## **Who is this service for?**

This service is designed for customers who pay more than 12 court fees per year.

## **Which courts can I transact with using my Fee Account account?**

The Payment by Account service is available in National Business Centres (County Court Money Claim Centre, County Court Business Centre), all offices of the county court and family court, probate registries, magistrates' courts which deal with civil and family work, Court of Protection and the Royal Courts of Justice and can be used to pay court fee administered by these offices.

[www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil](http://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/civil)

## **Can I use my Fee Account to pay for my MCOL transactions?**

No - your MCOL account is separate from the Fee Account process.

## **Do you offer a fully online service for issuing Money Claims?**

Yes, we provide an on-line service via Money Claims Online (MCOL). This offers a cost efficient alternative and reduced fees. You can use the MCOL service for specified money claims (claims for a fixed amount under £100,000, against no more than two defendants, with UK addresses with valid postcodes)

[www.moneyclaim.gov.uk/web/mcol/welcome](http://www.moneyclaim.gov.uk/web/mcol/welcome)

## **Can I use my account for payments into court (for example for the Official Receiver)?**

No, your account cannot currently be used for these payments. HM Courts & Tribunals Service are considering whether these payments can be included in the future.

## **How long will it take to process my application for the Fee Account service?**

When we receive all the completed documents we expect to provide you with a decision within seven working days.

## **Can I pay my fees for hearing in my local court by account?**

Yes you can use your Fee Account to pay for these fees.

**What will my invoice look like?**

You will receive an itemised invoice, detailing each case with your unique reference number.

If you have requested monthly invoicing you can opt to receive your invoice in paper format. This will be posted to the billing address provided on your application form. Otherwise you will receive your invoice electronically. This will be emailed to your billing email address, as provided on your application form, in pdf format. In addition to your pdf you may opt to receive an .xml format file. Xml format files can either be uploaded into your finance systems or can be opened using MS Excel or similar software in order to aid the reconciliation of your fees.

Settlement of the invoice is by way of Direct Debit from the customer's nominated bank account on or within three working days of the notifications date stated on your invoice.

**How can I manipulate the data from xml into MS Excel?**

In order to aid invoice reconciliation the xml file can be saved into MS Excel. For 2003/7 versions on Excel the following process should be followed.

1. Save the xml file on your pc.
2. Open MS Excel.
3. Choose Data on the toolbar.
4. Choose xml, import.
5. Locate file, import.
6. Choose OK.
7. Choose xml in new worksheet option.

This should then provide the data in Excel that can be manipulated for reconciliation.

**Where will any correspondence be directed?**

All account information correspondence will be directed to your billing email address as provided on your application form.

**How will any applicable refunds be made?**

The refund will be automatically applied directly to your Fee Account by the court and will be included in the next Fee Account invoice and Direct Debit settlement.

**What are the contact details for payment by account enquires and invoice issues?**

The Fee Account support team can be contacted at 01633 581341 or by email [MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.gse.gov.uk](mailto:MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.gse.gov.uk)

**What do I need to send to courts to ensure my account is debited?**

Ensure that each fee-attracting application lodged with the court is accompanied by the correctly completed paperwork and/or a letter on business letterhead advising the fee to be paid to the court. All court forms that request a fee will be amended in time for go-live. Clearly and accurately quote your Fee Account number on any document sent to the court which requires a fee transaction.

**How is my credit limit decided?**

HM Courts & Tribunals Service and their appointed providers/contractor carry out credit reference checks with a registered credit reference agency. If their recommendation is less than the limit requested you will be notified via your nominated email address. If you wish to appeal this decision you can do so by contacting the PbA support team

[MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.gse.gov.uk](mailto:MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.gse.gov.uk)

**Can my credit limit be increased?**

You will be informed of the amount of credit allocated to you when your unique Fee Account number is issued. To request a change in your credit limit you need to contact the Fee Account support team by email. Your request will be considered and you will be notified of the decision accordingly. HM Courts & Tribunals Service has the right to increase or decrease this limit at its discretion. You will be notified by email within three working days of any credit limit change.

**Can separate branches of my partnership have different payment by account numbers?**

Individual branches or businesses that are part of an overall group will be given a notional credit limit where those businesses are not recognised as separate business entities by HM Courts & Tribunals Service appointed credit reference agency. In these circumstances you will be notified of the notional branch credit limit based upon an equitable split of the group limit.

**Will this service be available for tribunal work?**

No, currently there are no plans to introduce this into the tribunals.

**Can I e-file my money claim documentation with payment by account?**

No, currently this is not possible.

**Is there a charge for the Fee Account Service?**

No, there is no charge for the service.

**Where can I get further information and sign up?**

Email [MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.gse.gov.uk](mailto:MiddleOffice.DDServices@liberata.gse.gov.uk)

**When will Fee Account be available nationally?**

This system has been available nationally since 17 November 2014.